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SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

JAN 14 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: Deputy Director (Plans)

SUBJECT: Wartime Bombing of Dresden by USAF and RAF

1. On a number of occasions over the past two years, it has been reported to us that the Russians and the Communists have made much propaganda capital among the population of Dresden in particular, but elsewhere in Germany as well, of the "unnecessary, unjustified, and barbaric bombardment of Dresden" near the end of the war. Recently we received a report of a new wave of Communist propaganda on this subject which contained the usual ingredients but was embellished with additional points including the large number of helpless refugees who were crowded into Dresden and the fact that Dresden was not a military objective.

2. In thinking over possible ways of countering or taking some of the steam out of this line of Soviet propaganda which is said to be quite effective, I recalled having heard on one or two occasions that it was the Russians themselves who had urgently requested these bombing raids. The story, as I heard it some years ago, was to the effect that the Russians represented to us that Dresden was a key communications center and that their drive against Germany from the east would be greatly facilitated if the marshalling yards and other communications objectives could be hit.

3. It seemed to me that if this story of the Russian request and instigation of the bombing could be in any way verified, it would make very effective counterpropaganda. Accordingly, I requested a research job to be done. The results of this research effort have been almost completely negative as far as documentary evidence is concerned. Mr. Millikan's office has reported that among the record centers which have been searched are: (a) Historical Divisions of the Military Defense Establishment, (b) General Dean's Moscow Mission reports, (c) Army Air Force's Headquarters, Staff, and Operating Records, (d) Secretary of State's personal files, and (e) all central records in the Department of State. A request was also made to the [redacted] and negative results reported, both in May 1950 to a similar request, and presently. Mr. Millikan's office concluded its report

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with a statement that the only evidence they have been able to find exists in the personal knowledge of Colonel Henry Byrode, General Spaatz, and the Senior RAF Controller in Churchill's War Room (1945).

4. It has occurred to me that you might have some recollection of this matter and that you might be able to supply some names or other leads which could be exploited by the researchers.

(Signed) FRANK G. WISNER

FRANK G. WISNER

cc: DDCI
ADRR ✓
OPI/OPC

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